

**MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR  
SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR (K-12)**

**I. PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS:**

An Initial Administrator Certificate (special education director) valid for a period of four (4) years from the effective date on the certificate will be issued to applicants meeting the following requirements:

**A. One (1) of the following:**

1. A professional certificate of license to teach in an area of special education or student services;

**OR**

1. A baccalaureate degree from a state-approved teacher preparation program in an area of special education;
  2. A recommendation from the designated certification official from a state-approved teacher preparation program; and
  3. Achieve a score equal to or greater than the Missouri qualifying score on the assessment designated by the State Board of Education for initial certification; and
- B.** A minimum of two (2) years special education or student services teaching experience approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
- C.** Successful completion of the building-level administrator's assessment designated by the State Board of Education;
- D.** Completion of a course in Psychology and/or Education of the Exceptional Child;
- E.** Completion of a master's degree in educational leadership from a college/university meeting approval of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
- F.** Recommendation for certification from the designated official of a college or university approved by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This recommendation shall be based upon the completion of a planned program for preparation of educational leaders which includes at least twenty-four (24) semester hours of approved graduate credit in education courses focused upon administration and supervision of the secondary or elementary school. The approved graduate credit shall include;
1. Specific courses (must be separate graduate courses of at least two (2) semester hours)
    - a. Foundations of educational administration including components of career and special education;
    - b. Special education administration;
    - c. Differentiating instruction in the general education curriculum; and
    - d. School supervision;
  2. Directed field experiences in special education administration of at least two (2) semester hours; and
  3. Knowledge and/or competency in each of the following areas:
    - a. Instructional management systems;
    - b. School law including components of regular/career/special education;
    - c. Teaching-learning processes;
    - d. Public relations;
    - e. Educational measurements;
    - f. Evaluation of teachers and human resource management;
    - g. School business and facilities management;
    - h. Philosophy of regular/career/special education;
    - i. Administration and coordination of special programs and service;
    - j. Administration and coordination of school activities programs; and
    - k. Instruction in communication skills (reading, writing, spelling, listening, speaking).

**NOTE:** DESE will not evaluate transcripts for administrative certificates.

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**II. TRANSITION ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATE**

- A.** The Transition Administrator Certificate, special education director, valid for a period of six (6) years from the effective date on the certificate will be issued upon completion and verification of the following:
1. Four (4) years of state-approved administrator experience;
  2. Participation in two (2) years of district-provided mentoring (during the first two (2) years of administrator experience);
    - a) Mentors must complete training addressing mentoring skills, Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, and the Missouri Performance Based Principal's Evaluation (PBPE) instrument. Training may be provided by the Administrator Mentoring Program that includes professional associations, regional professional development centers, colleges/universities and DESE.
  3. The development, implementation and completion of a professional development plan of at least 120 contact hours of professional development based on Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortia (ISLLC) standards, or eight (8) semester hours of graduate credit toward an advanced degree in educational leadership, reading/literacy or curriculum/instruction, or a combination of credits/professional development.
    - a) Professional development should focus a minimum of: thirty (30) contact hours on leadership training (vision building, communication, data-driven decisions, ethics, etc.), and eighteen (18) contact hours on comprehension and supervision of teaching of reading, and other items identified in the individual's professional development plan; and
  4. Successful participation in an annual performance-based principal's evaluation that meets or exceeds the Missouri Performance Based Principal's Evaluation.

**III. CAREER CONTINUOUS ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATE**

- A.** The special education director's career continuous administrator certificate will be issued upon completion and verification of the following:
1. Completion of an educational specialist degree or higher in educational leadership, reading/literacy or curriculum/instruction.
  2. Participation in a performance-based principal evaluation, or its equivalent;
  3. Participation in thirty (30) contact hours of professional development annually.
- B.** The career continuous administrator certificate holder is exempt from additional professional development if the holder has a local professional development plan in place with the school and meets at least two (2) of the following:
1. Ten (10) years of state-approved administrator experience;
  2. An educational specialist or higher degree in educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, or reading/literacy from an accredited college or university; and/or
  3. Certification from a board-approved nationally recognized professional administrator organization.